

Huerta Grande



"Huerta Grande" is a seminal text of South American Esperianismo. It was written in 1972 as an internal discussion document of the Federación Anarquista Uruguaya, right before the brutal military coup was installed in 1973. This is the first English translation.

Material for internal distribution about the theme of theory of 1972

To understand what is happening (the juncture), it is necessary to be able to think correctly. To think correctly is to be able to organize and treat accordingly the facts that are gathered in bulk from reality.

Without a theory one runs the risk of examining every problem individually, in isolation, starting from points of views that can be different in each case or examine them based on subjectivity, guesses or presentation, etc..

The party was able to avoid serious mistakes because we have been able to think based on concepts that have a important level of coherence. It has also made serious mistakes due to insufficient development of our theoretical thinking as an organization.

To propose a program we must know the economic, political and ideological reality of our country. The same is necessary in order to create a political line that is sufficiently clear and concrete. If we know badly or little, we will not have a program but only a very general line, very difficult to be made concrete in the different places we work at. If there is no clear line there is no efficient political practice. The political will of the party then runs the risk of getting diluted, "Voluntarism" in action ends up becoming just doing whatever comes up out of sheer good will. But we become incapable of acting in a pre-determined way on occurring events, based on an approximated prognosis. We are determined by the events and act on them spontaneously, without a plan.

Without a line for the theoretical work, an organization, no matter how big it is, will be bewildered by circumstances that it cannot condition nor comprehend. The political line presumes a program, which means goals to be achieve at each step. The program indicates which forces are favorable, which ones are the enemy and which ones are only temporary allies. But in order to know that we must knew profoundly the reality of our country. Therefore to acquire that knowledge now is a task of the highest priority. And in order to know we need a theory.



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The party needs a clear scheme in order to be able to think coherently about the country and the region and the struggles of the international proletariat throughout its history. We must have a efficient framework to organize and prioritize the growing mass of data regarding our economic, political and ideological reality. We must have a method to analyze these data, to see which ones are more important, which ones must come first and which ones only later, in order to correctly administrate our forces in this front of our work. A conceptual scheme that allows us to connect one thing to another in a systematic and coherent order and to do what we want with the militancy of our party. A scheme that bring close to us examples of how to work with these concepts to others that work in other realities.

But this work of knowing our country we must do it ourselves, because nobody is going to do it for us.

We are not proposing inventing theoretical schemes from scratch. We are not going to create a new theory and all its ramifications. The reason for that is the general backwardness of the movement and its specialized institutions, and our lack of availability to take on this task.

Therefore we must take an already made theory and start elaborating on it, analyzing it critically. We cannot just accept any theory with blind eyes, without criticism, as if it was a dogma.

We want to realize a complete transformation in our country and will not adopt as a way of thinking the theories created by the bourgeoisie. With bourgeois conceptions, we will think as the bourgeoisie wants us to think.

We want to study and think about Uruguay and the region as revolutionaries. Therefore, amongst the elements that are part of the different socialist currents, we will adopt always those elements that aid us in doing exactly that: to think and analyze as revolutionaries the country, the region and other regions and experiences.

We will not adopt a theory just because it is fashionable. To live repeating “quotes” that others said in other places, in another time, in relationship to other situations and problems.

The theory is not for that. Only charlatans use it for that.

Theory is an instrument, a tool, it's used to serve a purpose. It exists to produce the knowledge that we need to produce. The first thing that we care about is to know our country.

If it does not serve the purpose of producing new useful knowledge for our political practice, theory is absolutely useless, it is only a theme for idle babble, for sterile ideological polemics.

Someone that buys a big modern mechanized tool and instead of working it, spends all day talking about the tool, is acts badly, is a charlatan. Just like the one that, being able to have the tool, it rather do it by hand, because “that's how it was done before...”

Some differences between Theory and Ideology

It is important to point out a few differences between what was commonly called theory and ideology.

Theory points towards the elaboration of conceptual instruments used to rigorously and profoundly get to know the concrete reality. It is in this sense that

we can refer to theory as an equivalent to a science.

Ideology, on the other hand, is made up of elements of a non-scientific nature, which contribute to give dynamism to action based on circumstance that, although having something to do with the objective conditions, do not strictly flow from them. Ideology is conditioned by the objective conditions although not mechanically determined by them.

The profound and rigorous analysis of the concrete situation, in its real, objective terms – this is a theoretical analysis with the most scientific possible character. The expression of motivations, the proposal of objective, of aspirations, of ideal goals – that belongs to the field of ideology

Between theory and ideology there is a very tight connection, since the proposals of the second are founded and supported by the conclusions of the theoretical analysis. An ideology would be as efficient as a motor for political action inasmuch as it's based firmly in the conclusions of theory.

The reaches of the theoretical work.

Theoretical work is always a work that is based and supported in the real processes, in what goes on in the historical reality, in what happens. Nevertheless, since it is work that is located completely in the real of thought, there are no concepts there are more real than others.

It is important to point out some basic propositions on the issue: 1. The distinction between the existing, concrete reality, between the real, historical processes and on the other hand the processes acquired from knowledge and understanding of that reality. On other words, it is necessary to affirm the difference between the being and the thought, from reality as it is and we can know about it.

2. The priority of the being over the thought, of reality over the knowledge. In another words, it is more important, it weights more as a determinant to the sequence of events what actually happens in reality than what we can think or know about that reality.

Starting from these basic affirmations, it is important to understand the precise reaches of theoretical work, that is, the effort of knowledge guided by the purpose of acquiring rigorous, scientific knowledge,

Theoretical works is always realized based in a pre-determined raw material, It doesn't comes out of the real concrete, of reality as such, but comes out of information, data and notion of that reality. This primary material is treated, in the process of the theoretical work, by certain useful conceptual means, certain instruments of thought. The product of this treatment if the knowledge.

On other words, there are only real, concrete and singular objects proper (determined historical situations, in determined societies, in determined times). The process of theoretical knowledge seeks to know them.

Sometimes the work of knowledge points towards abstract objects that don't exist in reality, that only exist in the thought but that are however indispensable instruments a pre-condition in order to know real objects (for example the concept of social classes, etc.) Therefore, in the process of production of knowledge, one transforms the raw material (a superficial perception of reality) into a product (a rigorous scientific knowledge about it).

The term scientific knowledge" must be defined in its relationship with the social reality.

Applied to that reality, it's comprehension alludes in exact terms, to the best approximation of reality as it is.

It must be said that this process of learning about the social reality, as with any other study of any real object, is susceptible to an infinite theoretical deepening. Like physics, chemistry and other sciences can deepen their knowledge infinitely about the realities that constitute their respective subjects of study, in the same manner the social science can deepen indefinitely the knowledge about the social reality. Therefore it is inadequate to expect a

"finished" knowledge of the social reality in order to start acting on it in order to change it.

No less inadequate is try to change it without knowing it profoundly.

The rigorous scientific knowledge of the social reality, of our social transformation, is only achieved through working over information, statistics data, etc, through the means of more abstract conceptual instruments which are given and help constitute a theory. Through the practice of theory we seek the production of these conceptual instruments, each time more precise and more

concrete, conduced to the knowledge of the specific reality we are part of.

Only through a adequate theoretical comprehension, that is, profound and scientific, can be developed ideological elements (aspirations, values, ideals, etc,) that constitute adequate means for the transformation of said social reality with coherence of principles and efficiency in the political practice.

The Political Practice and the knowledge of reality

An efficient political practice demands, therefore, the knowledge of reality (theory), the harmonious postulation of it with the objective values of transformation (ideology) and concrete political means for attaining such transformation (political practice). The three elements are fused in a dialectical unit that constitutes the effort for transformation that the party aims at.

One may ask: Should we wait for a finished theoretical development in order to start acting?

No. Theoretical development is not a academic problem, it doesn't start from zero. Its foundations, its motivations and its development are premised by the existence of ideological values, of a political practice, More or less correct, more or less incorrect, these elements exist historically before theory and motivate its development.

Class war had existed way before its theoretical conceptualization. The struggle of the exploited did not wait for the elaboration of a theoretical work that justified its realization. Its being, its existence precedes knowledge about it, the theoretical analysis of its existence.

Therefore starting from this basic assumption, it becomes fundamental and a priority to act, to have a political practice. Only through it, through its concrete existence, in the tested conditions of its development can we elaborate a useful theoretical frame. One that is not a gratuitous accumulation of abstract postulations with some coherence in its internal logic, but without any coherence with the development of the real processes. To create theory with efficiency in necessary to act.

Can we do away with theory with the excuse of practical urgency? No. There may exist, shall we say, a political practice founded solely in ideological criteria, that is, unfounded or founded insufficiently in adequate theoretical analysis. That

is common in our environment.

Nobody can argue that, in our reality or the reality of our region of America, an adequate theoretical analysis, a sufficient conceptual comprehension, not even close. This is also applicable to the rest of our reality also. However, for decades and decades there has been a combat, a struggle. This understanding should not lead us to disdain the fundamental importance of the theoretical work.

To the question previously asked we must then answer: What has priority is the practice, but how effective this practice will be depends on the most rigorous knowledge of reality.

In a reality like ours, in the social formation of our country, theoretical development must start, as in everywhere, from a group of efficient theoretical concepts, working over an as ample as possible mass of data, that will constitute the raw material for the theoretical practice.

Data on its own, examined in isolation, without a adequate theoretical conceptual treatment, do not shed light on reality. They simply decorate and dissimulate the ideologies in which service these data are implemented.

The abstract concepts, in and of themselves, without cross-checking with a adequate information, do not give further knowledge of reality either.

The work on the theoretical field that exist in our country normally fluctuates between these two incorrect extremes.